

What is claimed is:

1. A method for authenticating objects comprising:

providing at least one object having a print region with printed material contained thereon comprising a layer of non-visible indicia, wherein the layer of non-visible indicia comprises a substance that emits at least one wavelength of light outside a visible range of an electromagnetic spectrum when stimulated with electromagnetic radiation;

creating an optical image of the layer of non-visible indicia with an imaging device such that the layer of non-visible indicia can be perceived by a human eye viewing the optical image;

recording the optical image of the object including the layer of non-visible indicia;

attaching identification information pertaining to the object to the recorded optical image; and

comparing the optical image of the layer of non-visible indicia to expected authentication indicia to verify the authenticity of the object.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the printed material further comprises an overlay layer printed over and obscuring the layer of non-visible indicia and wherein the overlay layer does not emit light having a wavelength outside of the visible range of the electro-magnetic spectrum.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the overlay layer is an encoded image.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the encoded image is printed with a frequency of a predetermined number of lines per inch wherein an authentication image is revealed

when the encoded image of the overlay layer is viewed through a lenticular lens having a frequency that matches that of the encoded image.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the layer of non-visible indicia is an encoded image.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the encoded image is printed with a frequency of a predetermined number of lines per inch wherein an authentication image is revealed when the encoded image of the printed image is viewed through a lenticular lens having a frequency that matches that of the encoded image.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising transmitting the recorded optical image and the attached identification information to a facility remote from the imaging device that recorded the optical image.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the image is recorded at a distance from the object greater than about 4 feet.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the layer of non-visible indicia is printed with a material that emits infrared light when stimulated with electro-magnetic radiation and wherein the device for recording the optical image is capable of receiving infrared light.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the stimulating electro-magnetic radiation is visible light.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the layer of non-visible indicia is printed with a material that emits ultraviolet light when stimulated with electro-magnetic radiation and wherein the device for recording the optical image is capable of receiving ultraviolet light.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the stimulating electro-magnetic radiation is visible light.
13. The method of claim 9 wherein the layer of non-visible indicia contains carbon black.
14. The method of claim 2 wherein the overlay layer is printed using an organic black ink.
15. The method of claim 9 wherein the layer of non-visible indicia contains phosphorous.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein the imaging device for recording the optical image of the object includes a lens having a variable focal length.
17. A system for authenticating objects having a print region with printed material contained thereon, the printed material including a layer of non-visible indicia that emits light outside of a visible range of an electro-magnetic spectrum when stimulated with electro-magnetic radiation, the system comprising:
  - at least one imaging device capable of creating and recording optical images of the objects, including the layer of non-visible indicia such that the non-visible indicia is perceivable to a human eye viewing the optical images; and
  - a central authentication system in communication with the at least one device to receive optical images recorded by the imaging device.
18. The system of claim 17 wherein the central authentication system is in communication with the at least one imaging device via a network of computers.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the central authentication system comprises a database, wherein recorded optical images received by the central authentication system are stored in the database.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the database further comprises information associated with the recorded optical images received by the central authentication system to identify a location of the objects of the images.

21. The system of claim 17 wherein the at least one imaging device contains a lens having a variable focal length.